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ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken of West Indian and white youths in Lewisham, England, who were entering the employment market for the first time in 1977. It was found that blacks were less successful than whites in the search for employment. Not only were they three times as likely to be unemployed, but those in employment had taken longer to find work, had made more applications, and had been to more interviews than whites. Despite their efforts, black school leavers were less likely to find the kind of work they wanted, and so were less satisfied with their jobs. The educational achievement of the blacks was generally lower than that of the whites. However, this did not appear to be the crucial factor in explaining the differing success of the two groups in finding jobs. Two thirds of unemployed blacks thought they had been discriminated against by employers. Discrimination appears to be an important factor in accounting for the difficulties faced by blacks in the search for work. The findings of this survey have numerous policy implications for employers, local education authorities, and the Manpower Services Commission. (Author/MC)

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LOOKING FOR WORK

Black & white school leavers in Lewisham

A SHORT REPORT OF A SURVEY CARRIED OUT FOR THE COMMISSION FOR RACIAL EQUALITY IN CONJUNCTION WITH LEWISHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL AND LEWISHAM COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY RELATIONS (LCCR)

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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CONTENTS

Foreword 3

Preface and Acknowledgements 4

1. Introduction 5

2. Aims of the Survey 5

3. Methodology 5

4.1 The Findings 6

4.2 Educational achievement at school/college 6

4.3 Careers education and the careers service 7

4.4 The search for work 8

4.5 Perceived levels of discrimination in job seeking 9

4.6 The employed 9

4.7 The unemployed 10

4.8 Community Industry 11

5. Conclusions 12

6. Policy implications and proposals for action 12

Appendix I Technical note 14

Appendix II A brief guide to further sources 16

FOREWORD

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) was set up under the Race Relations Act 1976 to work towards the elimination of discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. From its inception in 1977, the CRE voiced its concern about the plight of many young black people in our society and the need to adopt measures to assist them to enter employment as one of its priorities of action. However, such action must be based on a clear analysis of the range of problems which young people experience in obtaining employment. To this end, the CRE sponsored this survey, which was initiated by its predecessor, the Community Relations Commission, in 1977. The findings are disturbing: they point to a range of problems, including discrimination, facing many black school leavers in the search for work.

The CRE will be reviewing its policies in the light of the results of this survey and will be following up the recommendations in direct discussions with the relevant agencies. A number of investigations into the recruitment and other practices of employers have already been launched by the CRE and more will follow in the near future. A joint CRE/Manpower Services Commission (MSC) ideas group is looking into positive action to ensure that ethnic minority school leavers are adequately catered for by the new special projects under the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP). But, the struggle against discrimination and disadvantage is not the concern of the CRE alone; it should be the concern of Government, employers, trade unions and the public at large to assist all young people to achieve equal opportunity in our society. This report shows how much remains to be done in order to achieve this goal.

Peter Tucker
Chief Executive

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Under the Race Relations Act, 1976, the Commission for Racial Equality is empowered to undertake research itself and to assist others to undertake such research as can contribute to the elimination of racial discrimination and the achievement of equality of opportunity in the community. It was in the light of this objective that this survey was commissioned in 1977 dealing with the problems of West Indian school leavers in the Lewisham area. A similar study of Asian school leavers was also commissioned in the Midlands and has been published under the title *Aspirations Versus Opportunities: Asian and White School Leavers in the Midlands.*

All research projects undertaken by the Commission are intended to:

(1) assist policy-makers and others to pursue equal opportunity policies in their own organisations and areas of activity and

(2) be of 'strategic value' in the sense that their results should be applicable to related organisations and areas of activity far beyond those which were covered in the initial fieldwork and the areas in which such fieldwork was carried out.

Accordingly, the implications of these studies extend beyond the areas of Lewisham and the Midlands into every locality in which ethnic minority school leavers reside and experience the disadvantages which are associated with racial discrimination and the denial of equality of opportunity to which it leads.

Through the course of this research project, we were assisted by several organisations and individuals who freely gave us of their time and were consulted about the various phases. We are grateful to Mr Alfred Dubs of Lewisham Borough Council and to Mr Asquith Gibbes, Senior Community Relations Officer of the Lewisham Council for Community Relations for their assistance. The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) allowed the sample to be drawn from the records of Lewisham careers service and we are grateful to the staff for their help. A special word of thanks is due to Mr P. Kemp, Assistant Principal Careers Officer ILEA, Mr J. Taylor, Lewisham Divisional Careers Officer and Mr D. Vine, ILEA Statistician,and to the Opinion Research Centre who conducted the fieldwork. Finally, we are grateful to all those black and white young people who participated; without them the survey could not have been carried out.

Celia Williams was the officer responsible for co-ordinating the research and for the preparation of this report.

Dr Crispin Cross
Principal, Research Section
Legal and General Services Division

1. INTRODUCTION

The Community Relations Commission and subsequently the Commission for Racial Equality (which took over the functions of the CRC in June 1977) undertook this survey because of their concern at the lack of detailed information on the nature and extent of unemployment among black[1] school leavers. Although there is a good deal of anecdotal evidence on the problems facing black school leavers, there had been no major published survey comparing the job seeking experience of black and white young people since the Community Relations Commission's own *Unemployment and Homelessness*[2] published in 1974.

The present survey was started as the result of an approach to the Community Relations Commission by Lewisham Council's Race Relations Working Party on which Lewisham Council for Community Relations (LCCR) and elected members of the Borough Council are represented. Both the Council and the LCCR were very concerned about the employment difficulties facing local school leavers and felt that detailed information was needed to help them devise specific policies for action in Lewisham.

2. AIMS OF THE SURVEY

The aim of the survey was thus to undertake a detailed study of young people in Lewisham who were coming on to the employment market for the first time in 1977. Specifically it was intended to compare the main ethnic minority group in the borough – West Indians – with their white counterparts. The survey covered the young people's experience in looking for work, their educational achievement, their career aspirations as they left school and whether these had changed subsequently, how hard they had tried to find a job, and finally their experience of employment/unemployment.

3. METHODOLOGY[3]

Of the ethnic minority groups in Lewisham only school leavers of West Indian origin were included in this survey. The others were too few in number to enable statistically significant comparisons to be made and were therefore excluded from the sample lists. All other young people leaving Lewisham schools to look for work were included in the lists from which the sample were drawn, as were those who had attended Lewisham schools and were leaving South East London College having been enrolled on a full-time non-vocational course similar to one that they could have taken at school. Throughout this report the few college leavers are included in the general category of school leavers (24 young people were, in fact, college leavers). Those few school leavers who had moved into the borough and were looking for a job through the careers service were also covered.

The records of the Lewisham careers service were used as the sampling frame, since the lists of young people leaving school or college to look for work that are supplied by schools or colleges to the careers service are the most accurate records available of young people who are coming on to the job market in a locality. Schools inform the careers service of all the young people in the fifth and sixth forms who are known to be leaving. Only those very few young people who opt out of the educational system before the fifth form should be missed through this system. As it is known that some young blacks do leave school before the official leaving age, we approached ten youth/community projects in the borough that were known to be working with black youngsters in order to identify any young people looking for their first full-time job in the Autumn of 1977 who might not have been picked up through the careers service. This search only yielded one additional name. It is probable however, that a number of the more alienated black school leavers were among those whom the interviewers were unable to contact. (See Appendix 1.7. for details)

All the black young people shown on the careers service records as leaving schools in Lewisham to look for work in the Spring or Summer of 1977 were included in our sample. A random selection of the white school leavers who came within the scope of the survey was made by taking every fifth name on the careers service lists. In accordance with the policy of ILEA and to respect confidentiality, the sample was drawn by staff at the careers offices and then passed to Opinion Research Centre. All the young people who came within the scope of the survey had earlier been given the option of not taking part in the study. Interviews were carried out between November 1977 and February 1978 by black and white interviewers who were trained specifically for the survey (see also Appendix I). The main findings of the survey are presented in Section 4[4] under the following headings – characteristics of the sample, educational achievement at school/college, careers education and the careers service, perceived levels of discrimination in job seeking, the employed, the unemployed, Community Industry.

[1] In this report we use the term black to cover all young people of West Indian origin, that is generally those young people who were born in the West Indies or whose parents were born in the West Indies.

[2] *Unemployment and Homelessness* : A Report, Reference Series No. 3 (HMSO). Available from the CRE, price £1.00.

[3] See also Appendix I.

[4] Those wishing for further details on the survey results should contact the Commission for Racial Equality: Employment Promotion Section.

4.1 THE FINDINGS

Of the young people we interviewed 175 blacks were in employment at the time of the interview – 109 boys and 66 girls – as were 231 whites – 116 boys and 115 girls. The black interviewees were three times as likely as the whites to be unemployed. 72 (29%) of the blacks interviewed were unemployed as compared with 26 (10%) of the whites. The rate of unemployment was considerably higher among the black girls than among the black boys (in the sample). 39 of the 105 (37%) black girls were unemployed as compared with 33 of the 142 (23%) black boys interviewed.

These figures exclude the young people falling within our sample who were on the Community Industry scheme – 25 blacks and 4 whites. The interviews with this group are described separately under 4.8. They also exclude those young people who told us that having looked for a job unsuccessfully, they had already taken the decision to go back to school or college to continue their education on a full-time basis. We did not complete full interviews with this small group. In addition those school leavers who went straight on to some form of full-time further education or vocational training are obviously not included since they had not come on to the employment market. This last category very probably accounts for the comparatively small numbers of black girls included in our sample, as a high number probably went straight on to full-time secretarial/clerical training on leaving school.

The white sample was on the whole slightly younger than the black sample – 50% of the white sample were 16 at the time of the interview compared with 38% of the black sample. 22 of the black sample were college leavers – having previously been on full-time academic courses at South East London College – but only 2 of the white sample were in this category.

67% of the black sample were born in the United Kingdom and only 5% came to this country aged 12 or over. There appeared to be no difference in the relative success of those born in Great Britain and those born in the West Indies in finding employment.

The average household size of the black sample was larger than the white – an average of 5.8 compared with 4.5. Only 4% of the fathers of young people of West Indian origin were employed in non-manual occupations, compared with 32% of fathers of white youngsters. The West Indian fathers were more likely to be manual workers, particularly skilled manual workers. The mothers of the black sample were more likely to be working full-time as compared with those of the white sample, more of whom were working part-time.

4.2 EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AT SCHOOL/COLLEGE

The average educational achievement of the white sample was higher than that of the black sample. 10% of the white young people interviewed had achieved one or more passes at advanced level GCE compared with 6% of the blacks. 45% of the whites interviewed and 38% of the blacks had passed at least one 'O' level or CSE grade I. Further, the whites had passed an average of 3.5 'O' levels or CSE grade I, while the blacks averaged only 2.5. The whites were also twice as likely to have 'O' level passes in Mathematics and English. (A quarter of the white sample compared with 12% of the black sample had passed English 'O' level. 11% of the white sample compared with 5% of the black sample had passed Mathematics 'O' level.)

The black sample were rather more likely than their white peers to have achieved only low level passes at CSE (see Table I). However, 21% of the whites interviewed as compared with 12% of the blacks said that they had taken no exams at all. Three quarters of the blacks who had taken no exams were boys, but no such sex difference is apparent among the whites. Among the majority of the black sample who had taken exams at school, there are no significant differences between the sexes in educational achievement.

The difference in educational achievement between the black and the white sample obviously goes some way to explain the greater success of the white sample in the post-school search for work. However, there are clear indications that this is not the only, or indeed the crucial, factor. As is shown in Table I, at many levels of educational achievement blacks were more likely to be unemployed than whites (the distinction is not so clear among those young people with 'A' levels, and CSE grades 2-4 not including Maths and English. At both these levels of educational achievement there were only one or two unemployed).

Table I: Numbers of young people employed/unemployed at different levels of educational achievement

	'A' levels	*'O' levels inc Maths &/or Eng*	*'O' levels no Maths or Eng*	*CSE inc Maths &/or Eng*	*CSE no Maths or Eng*	*Less or none*
	No	No	No	No	No	No
Black employed	14	32	27	58	19	25
Black unemployed	1(7%)*	5(14%)*	16(59%)*	21(27%)*	2(10%)*	27(52%)*
Total black	15	37	43	79	21	52
White employed	25	58	25	53	14	56
White unemployed	1(4%)*	3(5%)*	3(12%)*	5(9%)*	2(13%)*	12(18%)*
Total white	26	61	28	58	16	68

*The % in brackets indicates % of total black/white sub-sample unemployed at each level of educational achievement.

Table I shows that while 26% of the black sample who had achieved 'O' levels or CSE grade I were unemployed at the time of the interview, this applied to only 7% of the white sample.

4.3 CAREERS EDUCATION AND THE CAREERS SERVICE

Nine out of ten of those interviewed said that they could recall careers lessons at school. Not surprisingly, among both the black and white sample, the employed were more likely than the unemployed to say looking back that they found careers lessons helpful. Nevertheless, the rate of satisfaction was not high. 42% of the black employed sample described careers lessons at school as 'not very helpful' or 'not at all helpful', while the same applied to 58% of the black unemployed sample. 61% of the white sample said that careers lessons at school had been 'not very' or 'not at all' helpful.

Nine out of ten young people had seen the careers officer while at school/college – there were no apparent differences between the black and white sample. However, since leaving school, the blacks had made more use of the careers service than their white peers. Seven out of ten of the blacks interviewed and only a third of the whites said that they had seen the careers officer since leaving school. Further, the blacks were likely to have seen the careers officer more often. 52% of the black school leavers who had seen the careers officer had done so on more than three occasions, but this applied to only just over 20% of the white school leavers. As a result it is not surprising that whereas 46% of the black employed sample said that they had found their job through the careers service, this applied to only 12% of the white sample.

In interpreting the greater dependence of the black sample on the careers service, it must be borne in mind that the whites were much more likely to have a job arranged either before leaving school or very soon after (see Section 4.4). Whites were also more likely to have found a job through a relative or friend or on their own initiative, and therefore did not so frequently need to rely on the statutory services for assistance.

When those who had seen a careers officer either at school or subsequently were asked how helpful the careers officer had been, nearly one in four (23%) described the careers officer they had seen as very helpful and a further 36% said they had been quite helpful. Again the school leavers' perception of the careers service naturally tended to depend on whether he/she had been successful in finding employment. 27% of the black school leavers who had found employment thought the careers officer had been 'very helpful', compared with 16% of those who were still unemployed.

4.4 THE SEARCH FOR WORK

The black young people we interviewed took longer to find a job than their white peers, made more applications and had been to more interviews. The differences between the two samples started before they left school: 42% of the employed white young people had a job arranged before they left school, whereas less than half of this proportion of the black sample had jobs arranged before leaving. Within two weeks of leaving school or college 38% of the employed white sample had started work but only 23% of the employed black sample had done so.

It is therefore not surprising that the blacks had made more applications for jobs than their white peers: 45% of the black sample compared with 29% of the whites had applied for six or more jobs. The blacks had been to an average of 5.4 interviews compared with the whites' average of 3.2. The average number of applications made by those who had succeeded in finding work was 8.0 for the blacks, compared with 5.3 for the whites. The differences between the unemployed are not as striking: the unemployed blacks had made on average 8.8 applications and the small number of unemployed whites had made on average 7.0 applications.

Neither failure to go to interviews nor turning down jobs are offered as explanations for the higher number of unemployed blacks. Further, the black school leavers appeared to be just as persistent as their white peers in looking for work. We asked a number of questions about the methods used by the young people in looking for work. Respondents were given a list of possible ways of finding employment and were asked whether they had used each method and, if so, whether they had done so once or more than once – see Table II. As Table II shows, among those young people who had been successful in finding work, the blacks said they had used every method more than the white sample. There were fewer differences between the unemployed sample. If anything the black unemployed appear to have been somewhat more persistent than the whites, but the number of white young people in the sample is small and the differences have to be interpreted with caution.

Table II: Methods of looking for work

		Employed		*Unemployed*	
		Black	*White*	*Black*	*White*
Base: all respondents		175	231	72	26
		%	%	%	%
Asking at the Careers Office	– At all	86	59	(83)*	(88)*
	– More than once	68	30	(72)	(65)
Answering job advertisements in newspapers or magazines	– At all	65	50	(68)	(77)
	– More than once	51	31	(58)	(58)
Writing or telephoning to an employer to ask if he has any vacancies	– At all	65	54	(57)	(46)
	– More than once	53	22	(46)	(35)
Asking family of friends if they know of any jobs	– At all	60	58	(72)	(73)
	– More than once	39	28	(51)	(58)
Looking at the display cards in the Job Centre	– At all	49	32	(65)	(65)
	– More than once	38	20	(51)	(54)
Asking at the Job Centre or Employment Office	– At all	46	27	(53)	(54)
	– More than once	34	14	(40)	(27)
Asking at a private employment agency or bureau	– At all	38	26	(42)	(27)
	– More than once	28	17	(29)	(23)
Listening for jobs on the Capital Radio job spot	– At all	37	28	(43)	(42)
	– More than once	29	22	(29)	(38)
Calling at a factory, shop, office or other workplace to ask if there are any vacancies	– At all	35	23	(64)	(42)
	– More than once	24	12	(50)	(26)
Looking for job advertisements outside factories, shops, offices and other workplaces	– At all	27	17	(43)	(54)
	– More than once	22	13	(36)	(46)
Asking youth or community workers if they know of any jobs	– At all	21	7	(30)	(23)
	– More than once	15	4	(19)	(15)

* Figures in brackets are used where the base for percentages is below 100

The black young people who had found a job had most usually found it through the careers service. As reported above, just under half of the black employed sample said they had found their present job through the careers service. On the other hand the whites had more frequently found their job through a relative or friend – 22% of employed whites compared with 13% of employed blacks – or in answer to an advertisement in the press – 16% compared with 10%. Approximately 15% of employed girls – both black and white – had found their jobs through a private employment agency.

4.5 PERCEIVED LEVELS OF DISCRIMINATION IN JOB SEEKING

66% of the black sample thought that it was more difficult for black people than for white people of their age to find jobs. While 38% of the employed whites thought that finding a job was more difficult for blacks, this view was held by only 4 of the 26 whites who were still unemployed; although none of the 26 thought it was less difficult for blacks. When they were asked whether they themselves had faced discrimination in searching for work one in three of the black sample said that they had done so – those who were still unemployed were very much more likely (69%) to say that they had done so than the employed (19%).

The instances of perceived discrimination mentioned were mostly of two main types: either the employer had denied that there were any vacancies or the young person felt that they had been discriminated against during the selection process.

> 'Me and my friend went to a store asking for vacancies and they said no. After a while one of our friends, white, went for the job and she got it.' *black female*
>
> 'I phoned and they said come in, when I came they said the job had gone. When I got home my cousin phoned them up and they said yes there was a vacancy.' *black female*
>
> 'Interviewer's face dropped when he saw me. He had the impression I was white when he heard me on the phone because of my accent.' *black male*
>
> 'When I went to...., we all took a test, about 4 or 5 blacks in the room among about 15 or so. We took a test in Maths and English. All of us blacks failed the test and it was an easy test. We talked about it afterwards.' *black female*

4.6 THE EMPLOYED

The largest single group of the employed were working in office jobs (in secretarial, clerical or accounts) – 62% of the white girls, 75% of black girls, 32% of white boys and 18% of black boys. Black male school leavers were much more likely than their white counterparts to be working in practical skilled or semi-skilled occupations.

Table III

	Black		*White*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Base: all employed	109	66	116	115
	%	%	%	%
Engineering/Mechanical work	11	-	4	-
Motor mechanic/garage work	6	-	4	-
Electrician/Radio/TV plumber/gas/heating etc repairs	15	(1)	9	-
Building/Construction	1	(1)	2	-
Other skilled manual	17	(11)	16	10
Other unskilled manual	14	(3)	14	5
Secretarial/office work	18	(75)	32	62
Armed Forces/Police	-	-	1	1
Shop work/Sales Assistant	10	(6)	9	17
Professions (includes nursing)	7	(3)	9	3
Literary/Art/Sport	1	-	-	2
Unclassified	-	-	-	-

Figures in brackets are used where the base for percentage is below 100

A majority of the employed were receiving, or expected to receive, training in their jobs (70% of blacks and 74% of whites). Most of the girls said that they were receiving short periods of training – usually of less than six months at their place of work. The boys' training was on average longer, only one in four or five had less than six months training. 36% of both the black and white boys who were receiving training claimed to have apprenticeships.

Only 30% of the employed sample were working in the Borough of Lewisham. Boys were more likely to be working in Lewisham than girls, many of whom are working in the City or the West End. Blacks and whites appeared equally likely to be travelling outside Lewisham Borough to work.

The white sample had been more successful than the black in obtaining the jobs they wanted on leaving school. As Table IV below shows, 46% of the blacks in employment had compromised by taking jobs different from those they had originally wanted compared with 29% of the whites.

Table IV: Success at finding the kind of work wanted

	Black			*White*		
	All	*Male*	*Female*	*All*	*Male*	*Female*
Base: all employed	175	109	66	231	116	115
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Present job is type of work wanted	43	39	(49)	58	61	55
Is not	46	48	(41)	29	24	33
Partly/similar	7	9	(5)	3	3	3
Did not know what sort of work wanted	4	4	(5)	10	12	9

The range of possible jobs is so wide and the number of individuals wanting each job was therefore so small that little can be said from this survey about differing success rates at achieving different types of jobs. For example, of the 19 black youngsters who wanted to be trainee motor mechanics, 2 succeeded in getting this type of job, 13 took other jobs and 4 were unemployed at the time of the interview. Five of the 15 whites who wanted to be trainee motor mechanics had got this type of job, 9 had taken other jobs and 1 was still looking. The success rate was on the whole higher for clerical and office jobs: of those who wanted to be secretaries/typists, 11 blacks and 10 whites had succeeded in finding this kind of work, 2 blacks and 6 whites had taken other jobs, and 7 blacks and 1 white were still looking.

The young people's success in finding the kind of work they wanted on leaving school not unnaturally appeared to be very closely linked with their relative satisfaction with the work they were doing. Since black school leavers were less likely to have found the kind of work they wanted, they were on the whole less satisfied with the job they were doing. 51% of the white employed expressed themselves as 'very satisfied' with the job they were doing, but this applied to only 39% of the blacks. 18% of the blacks claimed to be 'not very' or 'not at all' satisfied with their jobs, compared with 8% of the whites. The blacks and whites who had been successful in obtaining the kind of work they wanted were equally satisfied. 62% of this group said they were 'very satisfied' and a further 32% 'fairly satisfied' with their job.

4.7 THE UNEMPLOYED

As has already been made clear, the great majority of the unemployed – both black and white – were actively looking for work. (Only 2 of the black unemployed and none of the whites said they were not looking for work). Over 80% of those who were unemployed had registered themselves as looking for work at the careers service or local employment office.[5] Thirteen blacks and 4 whites were not registered as unemployed. 93% of those who were registering said they were receiving Social Security Benefit.

We asked the 17 who were not registering as unemployed, why they had not done so. The reasons given for non-registration were various. There was, however, little sign of alienation and hostility towards the statutory services among young people we interviewed, very probably because they had only recently left school and had not yet become disillusioned by their failure to find work.

[5] This voluntary registration must be distinguished from being on the records of the careers service used as the sampling frame for this survey – see section on Methodology.

Most of the unemployed were still looking for the type of work that they had originally wanted on leaving school or college. Only 22% of the unemployed black sample had changed the type of work that they were looking for in the light of their experience since school. The vast majority said that they were prepared to look for work outside Lewisham – the City of London or the West End being the most favoured locations.

The unemployed sample were asked if they could think of any training that would help them find a job. Just over half – both black and white – thought that they could. The range of training courses mentioned was very wide but few thought more academic qualifications would help them. A number were continuing their education by attending college on a part-time basis – 20 (28%) of the unemployed blacks and 3 (11%) of the unemployed whites. We asked the unemployed whether they had heard of any of the Government schemes or projects for unemployed young people. Two thirds of the black sample had not heard of any Government schemes or projects for young people, compared with 14 of the 26 white sample (4 boys and 10 girls). Among those who said that they had heard of Government schemes, the Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS) appeared to be the most well known.

When they were asked to rate in order of preference 8 aspects of jobs, the unemployed put most emphasis on work that is interesting. Good pay, learning a trade, getting a good training, friendly people to work with and a steady job are other qualities that were looked for. No evidence emerged from these, or other questions, that the unemployed had impossible or unrealistic ambitions. On the contrary, the realism of their objectives was shown in their answer to the question 'What would you hope to be doing in five years time.' By far the most common answers given by the unemployed blacks were 'A safe and steady job' or 'A job with a future'.

4.8 COMMUNITY INDUSTRY[6]

Twenty nine school leavers (25 blacks and 4 whites) were on Community Industry. They all described themselves as employed and were interviewed in the same way as the employed residents but their replies were separated since technically they are unemployed. A number of the young people on Community Industry appeared to be unclear about the purpose of the scheme and status of the training that they were receiving.

Although Community Industry is theoretically designed for the slightly older long-term unemployed, 11 of the 29 we interviewed on the scheme were only 16, a further 15 were 17 and the remaining 3, 18 years of age.

The majority of those we interviewed were either very or fairly satisfied with the scheme, the 4 who were not complained that they were not learning anything or receiving a training.

[6] Community Industry (CI), originally the brainchild of the National Association of Youth Clubs, has been in operation since 1972. The particular aim of CI is to prepare for regular employment in as short a time as possible unemployed young people who for various reasons find it more difficult than their contemporaries to gain and keep employment. Young employees on the scheme are provided with work experience in a controlled environment.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The black school leavers interviewed in this study had been much less successful than their white peers in the post-school search for employment. Not only were they three times as likely to be unemployed, but those in employment had taken longer to find work, had made more applications and had been to a greater number of interviews than their white contemporaries. Despite their efforts, the black school leavers had been less likely to find the kind of work they had wanted on leaving school and as a result were less satisfied with their jobs.

The educational achievement of the black school leavers was on average lower than that of the white sample. However, although educational attainment obviously played an important role in young people's ability to find work it did not appear to be the crucial factor in explaining the differing success of the black and white sample in finding jobs.

The black school leavers had searched for work just as hard – in many cases harder – than their white contemporaries. The majority of the black employed school leavers had had to try more methods of finding work than the employed white sample – a higher number of whom had found their jobs through relatives or friends. The blacks – both employed and unemployed – had made more use of the careers service than the white sample.

Both the black and the white unemployed sample were actively looking for work. The vast majority were registering as unemployed and were looking for work through official and unoffical channels. Two thirds of the unemployed blacks thought that they had been discriminated against by employers.

It is difficult to escape the conclusion that discrimination – be it intentional or unintentional – was an important factor in accounting for the difficulties faced by the black sample in the search for work. Black school leavers have in the past been accused of lacking motivation and of having unrealistic aspirations, of not looking for jobs through the most effective channels and of not being prepared to travel for work. None of these accusations were borne out by the young people interviewed in this survey. The young blacks we interviewed were looking for jobs just as hard and efficiently as their white peers but were still being markedly less successful.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

The findings of this survey have obvious policy implications for employers and for those statutory authorities concerned with the education and employment of young people. We draw out a number of these implications and make proposals for action below. The majority of the proposals are not new; they have been made before by the Commission for Racial Equality or by its predecessor organisations. They are, however, worth making once more since this survey underlines yet again the need for urgent action to promote equal opportunity in employment.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

In order to ensure equality of opportunity, it is recommended that employers should

i Monitor the ethnic composition of their workforce and of applicants for jobs within the company on a regular basis, as part of a formal equal opportunity policy. (The CRE has produced a guide to the introduction of equal opportunity policies and methods of monitoring ethnic origin: *Equal Opportunity in Employment; Monitoring an Equal Opportunity Policy.* Guides for employers available free of charge from the CRE.)

ii Ensure that recruitment methods are not such as to exclude black school leavers from the outset. For example, that the company is not recruiting young workers mainly through existing employees and failing to notify vacancies to the careers service or job centres as this, in itself, could constitute indirect discrimination.

iii Examine the success and failure rates of young black applicants for jobs within the company and ensure that discrimination has not been occurring at any stage of the selection process.

iv Ensure that as far as possible, selection procedures and criteria are strictly job-related and that applicants are not being turned down for reasons which are not relevant to the needs of the job. For example, ensure that stereotyped assumptions about young blacks as employees are not allowed to influence selection decisions.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

In order to fulfil their obligations under Section 71 of the Race Relations Act 1976 to ensure that their functions are carried out 'with due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity,' local education authorities should

i Allocate greater resources and staff to careers education in schools.

ii Through the careers service, monitor the progress of all school leavers in finding satisfactory employment or training including ethnic origin as a vital factor. The careers service do already distinguish the ethnic origin of young people on their records for statistical purposes, but very few offices regularly analyse such information.

A detailed analysis of what is happening to ethnic minority school leavers coming on to the job market is essential if local education authorities are to ensure that they are indeed meeting the particular needs of this group of school leavers for advice and assistance and are promoting equality of opportunity through the careers service.

iii Where ethnic minority school leavers are found to be falling behind their white peers in the post-school search for jobs and training, the careers service should analyse the reasons for this and ensure that the advice that is being given by careers officers is effectively meeting the needs of black school leavers and that all possible options are being explored with them.

iv This survey suggests that discrimination continues to work against black school leavers looking for a job. While the CRE recognises the need for professional confidentiality, we do recommend that the careers service should evolve more effective procedures for reporting employers where there is evidence of discrimination against black applicants for jobs.

v Two thirds of the black unemployed sample had not heard of any of the Government schemes or projects for young people. Local education authorities should ensure that these schemes are being adequately presented to young people through the careers service.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MANPOWER SERVICES COMMISSION

In order to counteract the negative effects of unemployment on school leavers, the Manpower Services Commission has recently launched the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) under which training and work experience opportunities will be offered to young people who do not find a job or training within six weeks of leaving school. Hopefully, these opportunities will benefit many black school leavers in the future. The findings of this survey confirm that:

i the MSC should expect to cater for a high proportion of black school leavers on such projects since blacks wil will tend to be unemployed for longer periods than their white peers

ii very positive efforts need to be made to ensure that information about the availability of training and work experience reaches the unemployed – particularly the young black unemployed.

APPENDIX I

TECHNICAL NOTE

1. The universe to be sampled

The population under study was all the young people in Lewisham Borough who finished their full-time education and came onto the job market in the Summer of 1977. This was defined as:

i Young people leaving schools in Lewisham Borough in order to look for work.

ii Young people leaving full-time academic courses at the S.E. London College who had previously attended schools in Lewisham Borough.

iii Young people who had just reached the official school leaving age but who had not been attending school regularly.

The upper age limit was set at 19 years because it was felt that the experiences of any young people leaving college at an older age than 19 would not be comparable with those of the school leavers who make up the bulk of the sample.

2. The sample

All the young people of West Indian origin in the groups defined above who could be contacted were interviewed. It was thus, as far as possible, a complete census of the black young people in the universe described above, in Lewisham.

The samples were drawn by the staff of ILEA Careers Service in Lewisham from their records. In order to achieve a similar number of interviews with whites as with blacks, one in five of the whites who were on the career office lists as leaving school/college to look for a job were selected for interview.

3. Exclusions from the sample

i The information held by the careers service is confidential and although no details about the young people, only their names and addresses and ethnic group, were being supplied it was decided that the young people should be given the chance to opt out of the survey at this early stage. All young people in their final year at school were therefore sent a letter and were asked to return a slip to the careers office, or to their teachers, if they did not want to be included in the sample.

A number of refusals were received by the careers office, in some cases from young people who were in any case not eligible:

Analysis of requests for exclusion

	Black *No.*	*White* *No.*
Continuing education at school or college	36	108
Entered or seeking employment	15	127
Destination not known	4	29
Total	319	

ii School leavers from the other ethnic minority groups beside those of West Indian origin were also excluded from the sample lists.

4. Additions to the sample

i It was suggested that some young people might not have been included among the careers office records if they had poor attendance records at school. It was felt that attempts should be made to trace and interview any such young people. Youth groups in touch with the black community in Lewisham were therefore asked to supply the names and addresses of any young people who might be eligible for interview. In the event only one additional interview was obtained by this means. The other names were either already among those supplied or had refused to participate or were too old to be eligible.

ii Because the number of young people of West Indian origin in the Borough was not as high as had originally been estimated the careers office also supplied us with the names of black school leavers who had moved into the Borough from elsewhere. Some 30 additional names were obtained in this way (these young people were also sent the letter asking them whether they would be willing to take part in the survey).

5. Fieldwork

Because of the additions to the sample the fieldwork took place over an extended period, from November 1977 to 30 January 1978.

6. Interviewers

The interviews with young people of West Indian origin were all carried out by black interviewers, and whites were interviewed by whites. Both male and female interviewers worked on the survey but it was not felt necessary to match interviewer to respondent by sex.

All the young people recruited to work as interviewers were given, as are all O.P.C. interviewers, three days of basic training. The standard course was modified in order to concentrate on the procedures used in this particular survey. After the basic training interviewers were accompanied by a supervisor for their first few interviews in order to help with any problems and to ensure that the questionnaire was administered correctly. Weekly de-briefing sessions were held throughout the fieldwork period and a proportion of each interviewer's work was examined so that mistakes could be pointed out there and then.

7. The response rate

There was no noticeable difference between the response rates obtained among black and white respondents. In each group 92% of all young people within the scope of the enquiry were interviewed. Full details of the response obtained are shown below:

	Black		*White*	
Total names and addresses issued	427		373	
Useless addresses	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Address not located	4	1	6	2
Not known at address	2	*	6	2
Premises empty/demolished	5	1	3	1
Moved, no new address traced	39	9	15	4
Total useless addresses (i.e. no interview possible)	50	12	30	8
Total within scope of enquiry	377		340	
Non-contacts	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Parent refused	1		5	
Child refused	13		10	
No reply after at least four calls	5		3	
Other (away on holiday etc)	12		9	
Total non-contact	31	8*	27	8*
Total addresses contacted	346	92*	313	92*
Not eligible				
Still at school or college full-time	56		44	
Other not seeking work	6		3	
Total not eligible	62	16*	47	14*
TOTAL INTERVIEWED	284		266	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Employed	175	62**	231	87**
Unemployed	72	25**	26	10**
Special measures (Community Industry)	25	9**	4	2**
Gone back to school/college having looked for work	12	4**	5	2**

*Percentages based on all possible interviews. **Percentages based on all interviews carried out.

APPENDIX II

A BRIEF GUIDE TO FURTHER SOURCES

Available from the Commission for Racial Equality

Notes for Employers : Equal Opportunity and Good Race Relations
1. *Equal Opportunity in Employment* 2. *Monitoring an Equal Opportunity Policy*

The Employment of Black People in a London Borough (1974). A report of a survey of black employment in Lewisham, 25p.

Unemployment and Homelessness, HMSO 1974, £1.00.

No Problems Here? Management and the multi-racial workforce. Includes a guide to the Race Relations Act 1976, IPM and CRE, £1.00.

Aspirations versus Opportunities: Asian and White school leavers in the Midlands, the CRE in conjunction with Walsall and Leicester CRCs, 1978, 75p.

Free leaflets and fact sheets. *A Guide to the Race Relations Act.* Fact sheets on employment.

Available from elsewhere

Smith, David J.	*The Facts of Racial Disadvantage.* A national survey, February 1974, PEP, £5.80.
Smith, David J.	*Racial Disadvantage in Britain*, Penguin Books, 1977, £1.25.
Smith, David J.	*Racial Disadvantage in Employment*, PEP, 1974, £2.20.
Department of Employment	*The Role of Immigrants in the Labour Market*, 1976. A comprehensive guide to the employment of immigrants in the UK. Available free of charge from the Unit of Manpower Studies, Steel House, 11 Tothill Street, London SW1H 9LN.